Sunday, 8 January

I had promised myself to return to this journal and to keep it regularly from the first of January on. But I have crawled along so miserably these last few days that, even begrudgingly, I could not have written a thing. To tell the truth, I didn't even try,

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. . . But it is true here as it is for music, where the chord of G sharp does not have the same meaning depending on whether you have reached it by way of the sharps or by way of the flats, and does not sound the same as the chord of A flat to the sensitive ear, though composed of the same notes.

The night before last, excellent conversation with Paul Albert Laurens, who showed me the possibility of writing *Corydon* in an entirely different mode. He would like me to make of it a work as serious as my *Enfant prodigue;* and this causes me to reflect at length.

Late afternoon yesterday at Mme R/s, where, for an hour, my mind endured the torture of the boot. She is charming nevertheless and shows a disarming kindness and goodwill; but what was I doing there? Speaking of T., I said to her: "He lives on an income, and in literature I like only those who eat up their capital." <e"As you so well express it," she immediately remarks, "that charming fellow hasn't the means." It is not at all that she is incapable of understanding; but she simply wants to have understood too quickly.

Then Peladan came; strange lack of accent to his face; fat, soft aspect of his whole body. He makes a few remarks in the d'Aurevilly manner: "Coffee and tobacco are the riding-whip and spurs of the mind," etc. . . . He accuses Gautier of "being short on general ideas" and adds: **As for me, I consider it quite natural that M. de X., meeting Y. for the first time" (he is alluding to a real fact, as far

as I could understand, and cites the names), "should ask him at once: What do you think of the infinite?' And whoever is amazed by that is an imbecile."

It is a great mark of wisdom to dare to appear an imbecile, but it takes a certain courage that I have not always had.

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Yesterday, lunch with the Espinases, the Drouins, and Uncle Charles. Gheon joins us; then, after lunch, Ruyters arrives. Long debate on politics. At about five Jean Schlumberger comes and we go out with him after having finished up the work for the JV.R.F. Once outside,